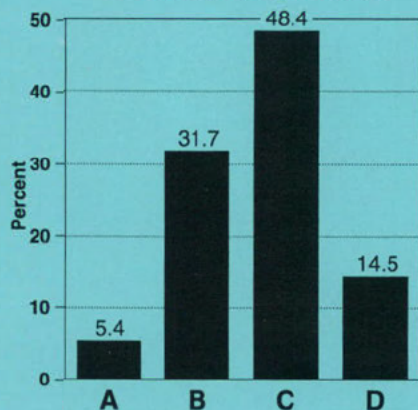


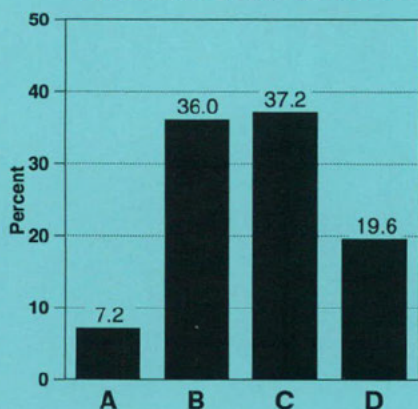
Social Studies 33

Diploma Examination Results Examiners' Report for June 1997

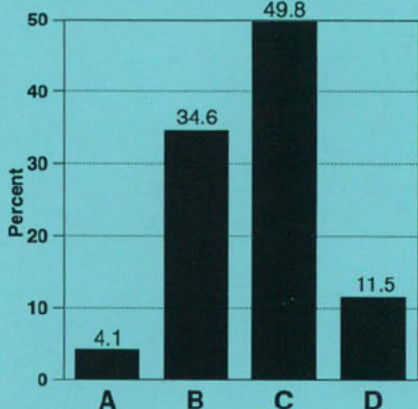
School-Awarded Mark



Diploma Examination Mark



Final Course Mark



The summary information in this report provides teachers, school administrators, students, and the general public with an overview of results from the June 1997 administration of the Social Studies 33 Diploma Examination. This information is most helpful when used in conjunction with the detailed school and jurisdiction reports that have been provided to schools and school jurisdiction offices. A provincial report containing a detailed analysis of the combined January, April, June, and August results is made available annually.

Description of the Examination

The Social Studies 33 Diploma Examination consists of 60 multiple-choice questions worth 60% and four writing assignments worth 40% of the total examination mark.

Achievement of Standards

The information reported is based on the final course marks achieved by 7 357 students who wrote the June 1997 examination.

- 88.5% of these students achieved the acceptable standard (a final course mark of 50% or higher).
- 4.1% of these students achieved the standard of excellence (a final course mark of 80% or higher).

Overall, student achievement in Social Studies 33 was satisfactory. Students demonstrated a good understanding of Social Studies knowledge and skills on the multiple-choice questions; however, the writing assignments presented greater difficulty for many students. The average score on the writing assignments was significantly lower than the average score on the multiple-choice questions.

Provincial Averages

- The average school-awarded mark was 60.3%.
- The average diploma examination mark was 61.1%.
- The average final course mark, representing an equal weighting of the school-awarded mark and the diploma examination mark, was 61.1%.

Multiple-Choice Questions

Examination Blueprint

There are 60 multiple-choice questions each worth one mark. Questions are classified in two ways: according to the curricular content area (topic) being tested and according to the knowledge and skill objectives required to answer the question. The examination blueprint illustrates the distribution of questions in June 1997 according to these classifications.

All questions on the diploma examination require students to demonstrate knowledge of social studies content and to apply social studies skills to that knowledge base. The reporting categories below define the general types of questions that appear on the examination and the categories for which information is reported.

		Question Classification by Topic		Total Questions
		Topic A: Political and Economic Systems	Topic B: Global Interaction in the 20th Century	
		Knowledge and application of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to the world's political and economic systems as outlined in the <i>Program of Studies</i> .	Knowledge and application of facts, concepts, and generalizations related to the interaction of nations since 1918 as outlined in the <i>Program of Studies</i> .	
Question Classification by Knowledge and Skill Objectives	Understanding Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their knowledge and comprehension of generalizations, key concepts, and related facts and content.	1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 22, 24, 27, 28, 30	31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39, 41, 45, 46, 48, 51, 57, 58, 59, 60	29
	Interpreting Information and Ideas These questions require students to use their understanding of social studies to analyze and interpret information and ideas.	3, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 23, 25	34, 40, 42, 43, 44, 47, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56	21
	Applying Information and Ideas These questions require students to demonstrate their understanding of social studies by applying information and ideas.	4, 6, 15, 21, 26, 29	35, 38, 49, 50	10
	Total Questions	30	30	60

Subtest Results*

Results are reported in average raw scores. Total of all multiple-choice questions: 40.0 out of 60

by Topic

- Political and Economic Systems: 20.0 out of 30
- Global Interaction in the 20th Century: 19.9 out of 30

by Knowledge and Skill Objectives

- Understanding Information and Ideas: 19.5 out of 29
- Interpreting Information and Ideas: 13.9 out of 21
- Applying Information and Ideas: 6.5 out of 10

*Readers are cautioned **not** to compare subtest results because the subtests are not of equal difficulty. Instead, readers should compare these provincial subtest results with their own school results.

Question-by-Question Results

Question	Key	Difficulty*
1	A	76.2
2	A	56.6
3	A	63.2
4	B	73.5
5	B	70.0
6	C	44.1
7	C	80.6
8	C	46.8
9	D	61.3
10	D	48.8
11	C	75.0
12	B	81.5
13	A	73.9
14	B	58.0
15	C	75.9
16	A	90.7
17	A	72.8
18	C	82.3
19	B	80.3
20	C	49.9
21	C	67.2
22	D	85.1
23	C	56.9
24	B	74.1
25	A	48.4
26	B	42.1
27	A	74.9
28	B	43.1
29	D	67.9
30	C	83.4
31	D	65.3
32	D	78.9
33	A	51.8
34	D	67.3
35	A	76.9
36	A	87.8
37	D	82.8
38	D	67.7
39	B	67.6
40	D	79.4
41	B	47.0
42	A	54.7
43	A	72.4
44	C	74.3
45	D	52.8
46	D	71.8
47	B	55.8
48	D	54.0
49	B	82.6
50	D	58.4
51	C	88.1
52	A	87.3
53	A	72.1
54	C	53.2
55	B	46.5
56	C	74.9
57	D	57.1
58	D	62.8
59	D	47.2
60	B	61.4

*Difficulty—percentage of students answering the question correctly

The table at the left shows question-by-question results and the keyed answers. Parallel tables in the school and jurisdiction reports show the percentage of students who selected each alternative. By comparing school and jurisdiction results with provincial results presented here, teachers can determine areas of strength and weakness in the achievement of their students and, consequently, areas of potential strength and weakness in their programs.

Examiners' Comments

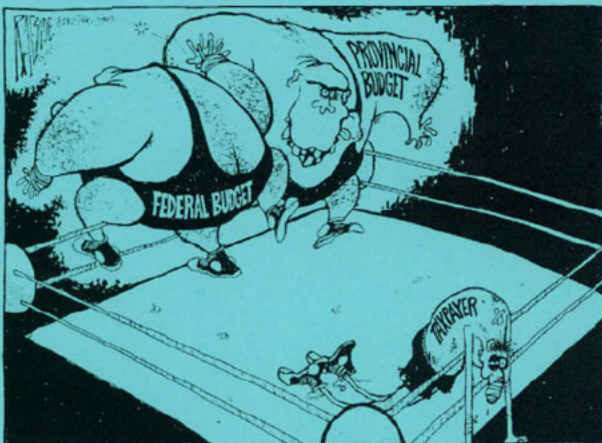
The multiple-choice questions require students to go beyond simply recalling information and to apply their knowledge and thinking skills. Students must demonstrate that they understand social studies concepts; that they comprehend historical, political, and economic relationships; and that they can interpret and evaluate social studies information and ideas.

The following table gives results for six questions selected from the examination. The table shows the percentage of students, in three groups, that answered each question correctly. The comments on pages 4 and 5 discuss some of the decisions that students may have made and some of the skills they may have used to answer these questions correctly.

Percentage of Students Correctly Answering Selected Multiple-Choice Questions

Question Number						
Student Group	5	6	29	40	48	58
All students	70.0	44.1	67.9	79.4	54.0	62.8
Students achieving the <i>standard of excellence</i> (80% or higher, or A) on the whole examination	94.9	74.8	95.7	96.6	83.5	94.2
Students achieving the <i>acceptable standard</i> who received marks between 50% and 64%, or C, on the whole examination	64.6	34.6	62.1	77.7	48.0	56.7

Use the following cartoon to answer questions 5 and 6.



—from *The Demented Decade*

5. The cartoonist is suggesting that Canadian taxpayers are
 - A. responsible for government overspending on social programs
 - *B. overwhelmed by the cost of supporting government operations
 - C. angered by government cuts to spending on health care and education
 - D. suffering from a shortage of high-paying jobs requiring education skills
6. Which solution would a capitalist **most likely** offer to the problem illustrated in the cartoon?
 - A. Expand government control over the distribution of goods and services.
 - B. Increase government spending on job creation and retraining programs.
 - *C. Reduce government spending on social assistance programs.
 - D. Raise the taxes of businesses and large corporations.

29. *The Nazi party, led by Adolf Hitler, was more formally known as the National Socialist German Workers' Party.*

To more accurately reflect Nazi party beliefs, which word should replace "Socialist" in the official name of the party?

- A. Communist
- B. Democratic
- C. Capitalist
- *D. Fascist

Questions 5 and 6 are both based on a cartoon portraying the Canadian taxpayer in a wrestling match against a "tag team" composed of the federal and provincial budgets.

Question 5 proved to be relatively straightforward for many students, with 70.0 % selecting the correct response. This question required interpretation of the message suggested in the cartoon and focused students' attention specifically on the state of the taxpayer draped over the ropes. Of students who achieved the standard of excellence on the whole exam, 94.9% selected the correct response, while 64.6% of students who achieved the acceptable standard chose the correct answer.

These results contrast sharply with the results for Question 6, with only 44.1% of all students selecting the correct response. This question required the application of social studies concepts to identify a capitalist's probable solution to the problem illustrated in the cartoon. Of students who achieved the standard of excellence, 74.8% selected the correct response, a rate that declined to 34.6% among students who achieved the acceptable standard did so.

The differing results for Questions 5 and 6 suggest that in general, students had little difficulty in identifying an important issue in contemporary Canadian economics, but found it much more difficult to come up with a solution to that problem from a particular ideological perspective. The skill of analyzing issues and viewing problems from a variety of perspectives may need to be given greater instructional emphasis.

The results for Question 29 were generally good. This question was easier than average, with 67.9% of all students choosing the correct response. Results were favorable among the sub-groups of students achieving the standard of excellence and acceptable standard, with 95.7% and 62.1%, respectively, selecting the correct response. The concern raised by this question, however, is the continuing ideological confusion between fascism and communism being demonstrated by many students. After the correct response "D. Fascist," the second most popular response was "A. Communist." This answer was chosen by 24.0% of all students, and perhaps more significantly, by 38% of students who failed the examination. With the exception of the highest achieving students, there remains a serious conceptual misunderstanding of the differences between fascism and communism.

A social studies 33 student created the following outline in planning a report.

Use this outline to answer question 40.



40. What is the topic of this student's report?
- A. The Causes of the Second World War
 - B. The Use of the Atomic Bomb
 - C. The Defeat of Nazi Germany
 - *D. The Holocaust
-
48. The **most symbolic** indication that the Cold War had ended occurred when the
- A. Soviet Union chose Mikhail Gorbachev as its new leader
 - B. Soviet Union withdrew its troops from Afghanistan
 - C. SALT I agreement was signed
 - *D. Berlin Wall was dismantled

Question 40 focuses on a planning outline for a writing assignment. The results were favourable, with overall achievement at 79.4%, indicating that most students had little trouble associating the terms provided in the outline with the Holocaust. Among students achieving the standard of excellence, 96.6% selected the correct response, while 77.7% of those at the acceptable standard and 55.7% of those who failed the exam chose the correct answer. It is of interest to note that 9.5% of all students chose alternative B, making it the second most popular response. These students may have too hastily associated one or more of the concepts listed in the outline with the destruction caused by the atomic explosions in Japan at the end of the war.

Question 48 was one of the more difficult questions on the June 1997 examination. The correct answer was selected by only 54.0% of all students (83.5% of students achieving the standard of excellence and 48.0% of students achieving the acceptable standard). On the surface, it may be assumed that the higher-than-average difficulty of this question can be accounted for by the strong distracting power of alternative B, an event that also occurred at the end of 1980s. Statistics, however, do not support this assumption—alternative B was selected by only 10.3% of the students. The second most popular choice (chosen by 26.5% of the students) was, in fact, alternative C, an event that occurred in 1972.

The results for question 48 suggest that the confusion experienced by many students resulted not from a misunderstanding of historical chronology, but rather from an inability to recognize the significance of key historical events. In fact, the results for this question appear to indicate that a large number of students are lacking in this skill area, an observation that is reinforced by results from questions of the same type on previous examinations.

Use the illustration below to answer question 58.



58. The slogan on the shirt demonstrates support for a foreign policy of
- A. appeasement
 - B. disarmament
 - C. isolationism
 - *D. deterrence

The overall difficulty of **question 58**, which is based on a T-shirt displaying a slogan, was 62.8%. What is interesting about this question is that it strongly discriminated between the two achievement sub-groups: among students achieving the standard of excellence, 94.2% chose the correct response, while students at the acceptable standard found the question much more challenging, and only 56.7% were able to identify the correct response. This question posed the most difficulty for those students who failed the exam, with only 29.4% selecting the correct answer.

What may have occurred is that students at the lower achievement levels found it more difficult to reconcile the message of peace shown on the T-shirt with the means by which it could be attained implied in the correct response (armed deterrence). This is suggested by the fact that among the lower achieving students, the next two most popular choices were alternatives A and B—both of which are more typically associated with efforts to preserve peace. To the credit of the higher achieving students, most were able to correctly interpret the message illustrated in the source and accurately equate it with a corresponding foreign policy.

Writing Assignments

The Social Studies 33 examination contains four writing assignments positioned throughout the examination. Each assignment is related to a specific curricular theme and assesses several skills. Readers will find the written-response results most meaningful in the context of the assignments and the scoring descriptors.

The scoring criteria applied to evaluate student performance are the same for each assignment. These criteria are found on pages 32 and 33 of the 1996–97 *Social Studies 33 Information Bulletin, Diploma Examinations Program*. Minor revisions were made to both scoring categories from those presented in the 1995–96 bulletin.

The table on this page outlines the requirements for each assignment, the categories for scoring each assignment, the amount each category contributes to the total mark of the examination, and the percentage of students achieving at the various levels. In June 1997, the average raw score for the writing assignment section of the examination was 21.1 out of 40.

The most useful starting place for reviewing the results is at the **Satisfactory 3** level. Such work exceeds the pass mark of 50%.

Examination Blueprint and Percentage Distribution of Scores

Description of the Writing Assignment*	Scoring Category	Proportion of Total Mark (%)	Percentage Distribution of Scores									
			Excellent		Competent		Satisfactory		Limited		Poor	Ins**
			5	4.5	4	3.5	3	2.5	2	1.5	1	
Writing Assignment I Contemporary Issues	Ideas and Support	7.5	1.0	2.3	9.4	14.8	30.8	20.4	15.7	3.4	1.5	0.6
	Communication of Ideas	2.5	1.1	2.0	9.5	17.8	43.8	15.9	7.3	1.4	0.5	0.6
Writing Assignment II Comprehension of Generalizations and Concepts	Ideas and Support	7.5	1.5	2.7	10.1	14.0	26.0	17.1	15.3	5.2	4.0	4.1
	Communication of Ideas	2.5	1.2	1.9	9.1	15.0	38.9	16.3	9.9	2.5	1.0	4.1
Writing Assignment III Interpretation of Visual Images	Ideas and Support	7.5	0.9	1.2	5.3	7.0	15.0	14.3	24.1	14.4	11.9	5.9
	Communication of Ideas	2.5	0.7	1.1	5.4	9.3	36.7	20.1	15.1	4.3	1.5	5.8
Writing Assignment IV Contemporary Issues	Ideas and Support	7.5	0.7	1.1	5.4	8.9	24.7	20.8	21.5	7.4	4.5	5.1
	Communication of Ideas	2.5	0.7	1.2	6.1	11.0	40.2	19.0	12.3	3.0	1.5	5.1

* See pages 19 and 20 of the 1997–98 *Social Studies 33 Information Bulletin* for a detailed description of the Writing Assignments.

** **Ins** (Insufficient) is a special category that includes students who did not attempt the assignment, who wrote too little to evaluate, or who wrote answers that were completely off topic.

Note: The shaded portion represents the percentage of students who achieved or exceeded a **Satisfactory** standard of performance.

Examiners' Comments

The June 1997 diploma examination provided many insights into the ability of students in Social Studies 33 to apply and communicate knowledge and ideas in written form. After four administrations, there remains a concern that the mean score on the written portion of the examination was only slightly above 50% (21.1 out of 40). Standards confirmers and markers, however, were agreed that both the writing assignments and scoring criteria were appropriate. Reports from schools and markers indicate that the examination was completed in the allotted time. The majority of students completed all writing assignments.

Writing Assignment I: Contemporary Issues

The first writing assignment on the June 1997 examination required students to read the responses of four candidates to the question "Is it time to privatize government health care services?" Students were asked to indicate the candidate who would get their vote and to explain why they had made this choice. Students performed very successfully on this assignment with nearly 80% of students achieving a mark at or above the acceptable standard on the *Ideas and Support* scale. On the *Communication of Ideas* scale, slightly more than 90% of students achieved a mark at or above the acceptable standard. A further indicator of student success on this assignment was the very low rate of INS papers—only 0.6%.

Markers reported that, generally, students were readily able to discuss this issue, quite likely because of its profile in the current political and economic climate. Many students were able to bring to this task a discussion of relevant, personal examples.

Students achieving **3 Satisfactory** commonly were forthright in identifying their choice of candidate and were able to support this choice with one or several logically consistent reasons. It was very common for writers at this level to provide support that was of a general nature, referring more to the needs of people and/or society rather than to a specific, detailed case study.

Students meeting the **4 Competent** and **5 Excellent** standards demonstrated a thoughtful understanding of issues related to universal, publicly funded health care. These better writers often forged a well-defined link between the quality of national health care and the economic productivity of the nation. Many of the writers at this level of achievement chose not only to justify their choice of candidate, but also to discount alternative candidates by pointing out flaws in their stated positions on the issue.

A common problem among those students who failed to meet the acceptable standard was an inability to go beyond identifying their choice of candidate and justifying that choice by simply restating the candidates' statements. Some of these writers contradicted themselves by indicating support for one candidate, and then supporting that choice using argumentation consistent with the position offered by another candidate.

Writing Assignment II: Comprehension of Generalizations and Concepts

Writing Assignment II required students to recall specific course concepts to respond to the question: *How does citizen participation in a democracy differ from citizen participation in a dictatorship? Explain.* Results for this assignment were also quite positive. On the *Ideas and Support* scale, over 70% of writers achieved a mark at or above the acceptable standard, and on the *Communication of Ideas* scale, the acceptable standard was achieved by 82.4% of students.

One point of concern that emerged among markers was that some of the students who failed to achieve the acceptable standard on this assignment did so because they completely confused democratic and dictatorial political systems, typically claiming that a citizen has a more active and significant role in a dictatorship than is possible in a democracy. Such papers demonstrated complete and consistent confusion, and accounted for some of the 4.1% INS papers.

Students achieving the **3 Satisfactory** level were able to provide comparisons of the two political systems that offered some insight into differences. In some cases, these discussions took a generic approach by offering a general comparison of systems, rather than focusing directly on the role of citizens in each system. Students also used this general approach when they described the systems, but made little or no reference to any historical examples. Some compositions at this level also contained overgeneralizations such as "If people speak out against the government in a dictatorship, they will be killed."

Students achieving at the **4 Competent** and **5 Excellent** levels clearly understood the assigned task and focused their writing on the role of citizens. Roles such as lobbying in democracies or serving in youth agencies in dictatorships were among those cited by writers. It was commonplace among these writers to refer specifically to the role of citizens under the rule of dictators such as Adolf Hitler and Josef Stalin. Many of these writers used concepts and generalizations discussed in the multiple-choice section to good advantage by expanding upon ideas offered in source materials.

Writing Assignment III: Interpreting Visual Images

The section of the examination focusing on the Cold War contained the Visual Images writing assignment. Two photo images were presented: one of an American soldier and a Soviet soldier embracing at the conclusion of the Second World War, and a second photograph showing a Soviet bloc border guard peering over the Berlin Wall toward the West during the height of the Cold War. The question asked of students was: *What idea(s) do the photographs convey about changing relations between the Soviet Union and the United States since the Second World War?*

Markers expressed concern over the number of students who demonstrated difficulties in responding to the assigned task. This concern was borne out by examination results. On the *Ideas and Support* scale, only 43.7% of students achieved the acceptable standard, meaning that over one-half of them were not up to the standard for this assignment. Another measure of the difficulty that this assignment presented for students was that nearly 6% of responses were given an INS grading.

A common problem among the group of students failing to meet the acceptable standard was historical confusion. Some writers appeared to have no idea that the Soviets and Americans were allies during the Second World War. This led to a variety of incorrect interpretations of at least one of the visual sources. Many of the **2 Limited** responses were simply literal descriptions of the two photographs with a minimal (if any) attempt to discuss the connections between the two sources.

Students achieving **3 Satisfactory** often took a very conventional approach to structuring their response. They usually referred to each image and followed with a discussion that clearly linked the images to an overall theme. At this level of achievement, responses focused on the idea of the two superpowers moving from "friends to enemies" as a result of their struggle for supremacy. Reference may or may not have been made to some of the specific Cold War events that exemplified the change in relations that occurred.

Students achieving **4 Competent** and **5 Excellent** results demonstrated a clear understanding of the ideological split that drove a wedge between the superpowers for over forty years. A limited number of students were perceptive enough to realize that at the end of the Cold War relations moved back toward the characterization in the first photograph, as relations once again warmed between the United States and Russia.

Writing Assignment IV: Contemporary Issues

The final writing assignment on the June 1997 examination was preceded by a student opinion survey with six questions focusing on Canadian foreign policy roles. The question asked was: *How can Canada best participate in the international community?*

Achievement results for this assignment were higher than those for Writing Assignment III, but below those achieved on the first two writing assignments on the examination. On the *Ideas and Support* scale, almost 62% of students achieved the acceptable standard, while on the *Communication of Ideas* scale, the acceptable standard was achieved by just over 78% of students. Approximately 5% of responses to this assignment were judged as INS.

Students achieving **4 Competent** and **5 Excellent** demonstrated a pleasing level of sophistication in their responses to this task. Many of these writers recognized that there are consequences to the foreign policy decisions made by Canada and made their suggestions having considered these consequences. Many of these writers referred to one or several of the topic areas in the opinion survey and concentrated on a thorough discussion of these topics, typically citing specific and relevant contemporary or historical examples.

It was very common for students achieving **3 Satisfactory** to use the questions in the opinion survey as a writing outline, and to briefly discuss each of the six topic areas. Although these responses often lacked specific examples, writers were able to express appropriate ideas regarding Canadian foreign policy.

Many students who failed to achieve the acceptable standard were unable to do little more than rework or restate the six questions in the survey. At best, these students provided only minimal support for their positions. Others who failed to meet the acceptable standard offered contradictory ideas regarding Canada's foreign policy initiatives.

For further information, contact Tim Coates (tcoates@edc.gov.ab.ca) or Elana Scraba (escraba@edc.gov.ab.ca) at the Student Evaluation Branch, 427-0010. To call toll-free from outside of Edmonton, dial 310-0000.

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